

NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
318 South Sixth Street
Springfield, IL 62701
Tel: 217/492-4450

RODGER A. HEATON
U.S. ATTORNEY
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS



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Contact: Gregory M. Gilmore
Assistant U.S. Attorney
(217) 492-4450

Missouri Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Manufacture Meth

Springfield, Illinois -- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that a Missouri man, James Stevens, age unavailable, pled guilty on Friday, January 27, 2006, to conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory M. Gilmore presented the factual basis for the plea during a court appearance before U.S. District Judge Jeanne E. Scott. Assistant U.S. Attorney Gilmore said that in March 2004, Stevens and another man, Charles Palmer, age and address unavailable, traveled from the Sullivan, Missouri area to the Chicago area where they purchased 6,334 pseudoephedrine tablets. On March 21, 2004, the two were returning from Chicago late at night when they stopped at the Brandt Fertilizer plant in Raymond, to steal anhydrous ammonia. The Raymond Police Chief arrived at the plant while on patrol to check the area and Stevens and his co-defendant fled the area.

The Raymond Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration investigated the case which is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory M. Gilmore.

Stevens remains on bond pending sentencing which is scheduled for May 26, 2006. At sentencing, the maximum statutory penalty for the offense is 20 years in prison and a fine of \$1,000,000. If the defendant has a prior felony drug conviction, the penalty is up to 30 years in prison and a fine of \$2,000,000.

Palmer is scheduled for trial on April 3, 2006. Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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